



# Christ Lutheran Church Confirmation Ministry MENTOR GUIDE

## **Why Mentors?**

*“...since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses... let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith...”*  
(Hebrews 12:1)

There is no doubt that my own Confirmation experience was an important factor in leading to my continued growth in faith as an adult. When I look back on that experience, though, what I remember most has more to do with relationship than content. I did indeed learn about the Small Catechism and Bible and faith practices. But even more, my connection to Church and my relationship with God was strengthened through the relationship I developed with the pastor who spent time with me every Wednesday afternoon for two years.

Research, of course, bears out the importance of caring adults in the lives of young people. Search Institute lifts up the significance of “Developmental Relationships” in which such caring adults *express care, challenge growth, provide support, share power, and expand possibilities*. (Read more at: <http://www.search-institute.org/sites/default/files/a/Dev-Relationships-Framework.pdf>). In the late 1990’s Luther Seminary Professor Rollie Martinson led a study that identified eight shared traits of committed young people who remain active in the life of a faith community as adults. Number two on that list is that youth have “at least three non-parent adult mentors of vital faith.” (For a synopsis of the study, visit: <http://vibrantfaith.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/ResearchPP-logo10.26.09.pdf>).

Connections to people create connections to Church and to the God who is made known through its ministry.

Thank you for giving your time and energy to be a caring adult, part of “the great cloud of witnesses,” in the lives of the youth of Christ Lutheran Church!

## **The Role of Confirmation Mentors**

Confirmation is not only about learning what Lutheran Christians believe. More importantly, it is about discovering how we take what we believe and live it in our daily lives. In addition to fulfilling the role of caring adult, you also have the opportunity to be a role model to your student. By coming to know you and your way of life, your confirmand is offered another example of how Lutherans attempt to live their faith.

A willingness to share your story is an essential dimension of being a mentor. It helps your confirmand to hear how you have grown in your faith, to know that you still struggle and have questions, and to understand the values you bring to decision making. It is helpful for your confirmand to hear from you about concrete experiences in your life where your faith has made a difference. Include both the joys and struggles you have experienced on your faith journey. It is important to communicate that a person does not have to be perfect in order to be faithful.

Through your gifts of time and care, you are a witness of God's transforming love. My prayer is that not only will our youth benefit from their relationships with you, but that you will also learn and grow from your time and conversation with another traveler on the journey of faith.

## **Mentor Job Description**

Essentials:

- Participate in monthly Mentor/Student Meetings
  - Use the provided "Discussion Guides" to direct discussion but allow conversation to flow naturally. Never feel that you need to talk about every question.
- Pray regularly for your confirmand
- Share honestly and listen without judgment
- Get to know your confirmand
- Encourage your student in their life and faith

Possibilities:

- Participate in Service Projects together
- Send encouraging notes to your confirmand
- Sit with your student in worship
- Invite your confirmand to join you at other congregational events
- Attend his/her extra-curricular events



## **Ensuring Safety and Security**

- Do not meet alone with a student behind a closed door
- Any email/social media communication must be approved by and accessible to parent(s)
- Mentors should not meet with students in person or on the phone without parental permission
- Communicate concerns about confirmand's speech or behavior with one of the pastors

## **Prayers for Confirmands** (from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* hymnal)

God of all good gifts, your Son gathered children into his arms and blessed them. Help us to understand our youth as they grow in years and in knowledge of your world. Give us compassion when they face temptations and experience failures. Teach us to encourage their search for truth and value in their lives. Help us to appreciate their ideals and sympathize with their frustrations; that with them we may look for a better world than either we or they have known; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord God of our ancestors, we thank you for what you have done and will continue to do with our daughters and sons. Walk with them in life, and keep the evil one from obstructing their path. You see all; you know where the water is deep. Keep them from danger. Order their steps and guide their feet while they run the race of faith. May the good work that you have begun in them be brought to completion at the day of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.